

Recreation

This section documents the existing recreation resources in the project area, identifies how the alternatives being considered would affect these resources, and discusses possible mitigation measures to offset these effects. For the purposes of this project, recreation resources include open space, parks, and recreational trails. Open space and parks are differentiated by their intended function: open space is intended to provide natural, undeveloped space for both passive and active recreation. Open space is often designated to protect important environmental resources and provide links in a regional wildlife habitat network. Parks are typically developed (landscaped) spaces intended for more active recreation by providing sporting, trail, and other facilities. However, parks often contain undeveloped areas that are similar to open space.

Affected Environment

Recreation resources within the project area include the RTC Trail and Open Space, the Bear Creek Trail, Slough House Park, the Sammamish River Trail, Luke McRedmond Landing, and Riverwalk. Marymoor Park is a major regional facility located south of SR 520, just outside of the project area (see Figure 3.9).



RTC Open Space

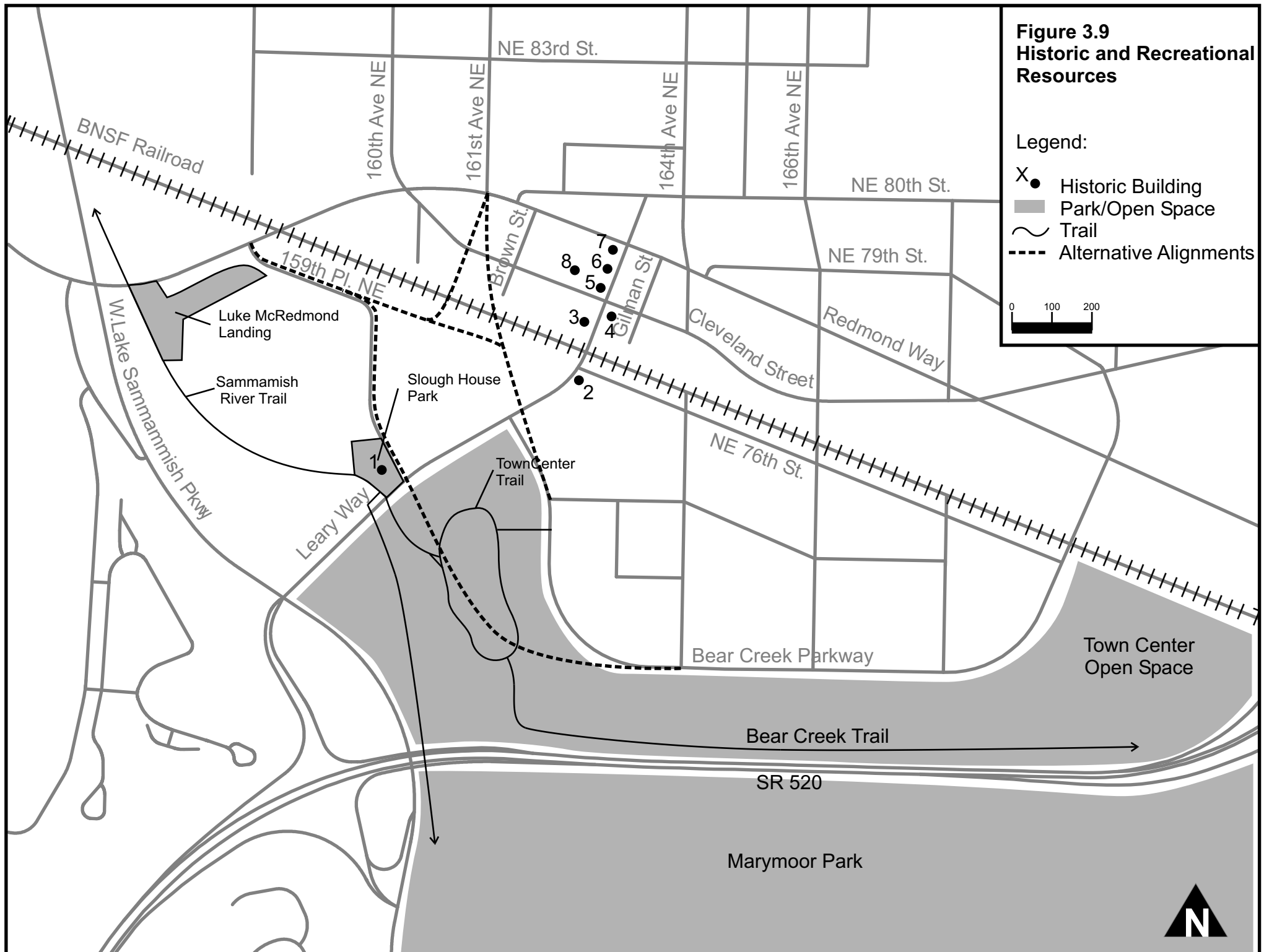
The RTC Trail and Open Space is a 44-acre parcel dedicated to the City as a condition of the development of RTC. The parcel includes the RTC water quality ponds and a loop trail that connects RTC with the Sammamish River Trail and the new Bear Creek Trail. The parcel includes the remains of an old golf course, and contains both landscaped and natural (wooded) areas. The RTC Open Space also includes the Bear Creek drainage, which is currently channelized although there are

plans to reestablish the natural floodplain in this area. A portion of the Bear Creek Trail was recently constructed along this drainage to the south of Bear Creek Parkway.

Figure 3.9
Historic and Recreational Resources

Legend:

- X ● Historic Building
- Park/Open Space
- ~ Trail
- - - Alternative Alignments



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The Bear Creek Trail is a multi-use trail that is part of the larger Bear Creek-Evans Creek Trail and Greenway, which will eventually connect Downtown Redmond with Farrel McWhirter Park in the northeast area of Redmond. The Bear Creek-Evans Creek Trail project is intended to provide a transportation link and a habitat corridor for fish and wildlife. In 2001 the City completed the portion of the trail along Bear Creek between the Sammamish River Trail and Redmond Way east of Town Center.



Bear Creek Trail

Slough House Park is located at the northwest corner of Leary Way and 159th Place NE. It is 2.32 acres in size and contains the Haida House studio, a city landmark where northwest artist Dudley Carter spent the last years of his life. The park closed in 1999 and is expected to be transferred to the City of Redmond from King County and will serve as a trailhead for the Redmond Riverwalk (see the following description).



Slough House Park

The Sammamish River Trail is a ten-mile paved trail with a soft-surface shoulder that connects Redmond to Woodinville and Bothell. In Bothell, it becomes the Burke-Gilman Trail, which continues for another 17 miles around the north and west edges of Lake Washington, ending at Gas Works Park in the Fremont area of Seattle. King County manages the Sammamish River Trail. Within the project area, the trail begins in Marymoor Park south of SR 520, runs north along the west side of the Sammamish River, crosses over the river at Leary Way, then follows the east side of the river toward the north. The trail is accessible to all forms of non-motorized transportation, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians. It serves as an important transportation link and a recreational facility.

Luke McRedmond Landing is a City of Redmond park on the east side of the Sammamish River, just south of Redmond Way. The park is 2.5 acres in size and contains open space, picnic areas, a fishing pier, and a canoe launch. The Sammamish River Trail runs adjacent to the park and there is another large loop trail on the property. The access to Luke McRedmond Landing is off 159th Place NE.



Luke McRedmond Landing

The Redmond Riverwalk is a habitat enhancement and recreational project that follows 1.3 miles of the Sammamish River Trail through Downtown Redmond. The walk will eventually include two gateways at the north and south ends, interpretive stops, and community amenities such as gardens, a fishing pier, and river access. The project also includes improvements to existing facilities such as the City Campus and Luke McRedmond Landing. The southern gateway to the Riverwalk was recently completed just north of Leary Way. It consists of a circular brick-paved plaza with a bench, signs, landscaping, and lighting. An information kiosk will also be provided. The Riverwalk will work to reestablish the Sammamish River's natural riparian habitat. It provides visual and physical access to the river, and controls this access to protect habitat. It also provides an additional pedestrian connection within the downtown area.

Marymoor Park is located at SR 520 at West Lake Sammamish Parkway, south of the project area. It is one of King County's most popular parks and has over 3 million visitors per year. Marymoor Park covers one square mile (640 acres) and includes facilities for tennis, baseball, soccer, cricket, lacrosse, picnicking, hiking, and fishing. It also has a velodrome for bicycle racing (the only one of its kind in Washington state), a man-made rock climbing structure, a model airplane flying field, garden plots for rent to the general public, and an area for off-leash dogs. The park offers nature tours, and recently implemented an outdoor summer concert series. Marymoor Park also includes Willowmoor Farm, a National Register historic site housing the Clise Mansion, a turn-of-the-century hunting lodge. The park contains large wild areas and wetlands that are home to many species of plants, wildlife, birds, and marine life.

In addition to these existing facilities, there are plans to turn the BSNF railroad corridor into an area of open space, trails, landscaping, and potentially transit. One element of this plan would be a paved multi-use trail for pedestrian and bicyclist use. Other elements would include landscaping buffers and possible park spaces.

Environmental Impacts

Impacts to recreation resources can be direct (i.e., acquisition of a resource for project use) or indirect (i.e., eliminating or restricting access to a facility, causing visual, noise, or air quality impacts to a facility, or otherwise affecting the resource's intended use).

This section describes the construction and operational impacts to recreation resources associated with each project alternative.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative will not affect any recreation resources.

Alternative 1

Construction impacts for Alternative 1 would include temporary increases in noise and dust for users of the RTC Trail and Open Space and the Sammamish River and Bear Creek Trails. Construction equipment would be visible from these recreation areas. Temporary closure and detour of the Sammamish River Trail during work on the Leary Way Bridge would be required. Increased congestion and traffic delays during construction may impede access to surrounding park and recreation facilities.

Alternative 1 would bisect the existing RTC Trail and Open Space. Approximately 3.2 acres of that space would be converted to roadway or wetpond use. One of the existing water quality ponds would be reconfigured and two new ponds would be constructed. Alternative 1 would disrupt the RTC Trail's current alignment, and the existing connection between the Sammamish River Trail and RTC would be eliminated. 159th Place NE near Luke McRedmond Landing would be widened, and 2132 square feet (0.05 acres) of right-of-way from this park would be acquired.

Acquisition of property from the RTC Open Space and Trail would not be consistent with the conditions under which this property was dedicated. This property was dedicated as open space in perpetuity, as a condition of RTC development. Acquisition from the RTC Open Space and Trail and from Luke McRedmond Landing would also be inconsistent with the City's stated policy of maintaining open-space corridors for recreation and habitat preservation (see Policy NE-68 in the Conservation and Natural Environment Chapter and the various PR (Parks and Recreation) policies in the Parks and Recreation Chapter of the RCP). Alternative 1 would eliminate a link in the City's trail system and create a barrier to wildlife movement across the RTC Open Space and Bear Creek.

Alternative 2

Construction impacts for Alternative 2 would include temporary increases in noise and dust near Luke McRedmond Landing. Construction equipment would be visible from parts of this park. Increased congestion and traffic delays during construction may impede access to this and other surrounding recreation facilities.

Alternative 2 would affect Luke McRedmond Landing in the same way as Alternative 1. 2132 square feet (0.05 acres) of right-of-way would be acquired from the park for widening and intersection improvements at 159th Place NE and Redmond Way. Alternative 2 would parallel the open space and trail planned for the BNSF Railroad corridor. The trail would be shielded from the roadway by other (existing) development, with the exception of the area near the King County shop site. Here the roadway would be visible from the trail, although it would be approximately 120 feet away. Alternative 2 would not affect any existing trails or open space, nor would it provide any additional trail connections.

Alternative 2 would use 0.26 acres of the RTC Open Space for a new wetpond. Trail connections would be maintained.

Alternative 3

Construction impacts under Alternative 3 would be minimal. Increased congestion and traffic delays during construction may impede access to surrounding park and recreation facilities.

Alternative 3 would have no long-term impacts on existing recreation resources. It would cross the proposed BNSF Railroad corridor trail and open space. This crossing would be at grade and aligned diagonally across the railroad corridor. A diagonal crossing would use 0.24 acres of the BNSF right-of-way (slightly more than a perpendicular crossing, as described for Alternative 4, below). This new roadway would allow pedestrian access to the open space and trail alignment. Trail users would need to stop and potentially yield to cross traffic. (Signalization will not be implemented as part of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension Project. Crossing control mechanisms would be examined during planning of the proposed BNSF trail facility). The BNSF open space and trail and the Bear Creek Parkway extension were both examined in the Downtown Transportation Master Plan (DTMP).

Alternative 3 would use 0.21 acres of the RTC Open Space for a new wetpond. Trail connections would be maintained.

Alternative 4

Construction impacts for Alternative 4 would include temporary increases in noise and dust near Luke McRedmond Landing. Construction equipment would be visible from parts of this park. Increased congestion and traffic delays during construction may impede access to this and other surrounding recreation facilities.

Alternative 4 combines Alternatives 2 and 3 and would have similar impacts on recreation resources. It would involve acquiring 2,132 square feet (0.05 acres) of right-of-way from Luke McRedmond Landing along 159th Place NE, and would run parallel to the planned BNSF Railroad corridor open space and trail. The roadway would be visible from the proposed trail near the King County shop site, although it would be approximately 120 feet away. Alternative 4 would also cross the planned BNSF Railroad open space and trail at a perpendicular at-grade crossing. This north-south connection would originate in the King County shop site parcel and would be roughly aligned with 161st Ave NE. Approximately 0.14 acres of railroad right-of-way would be acquired. This new roadway would allow pedestrian access to the open space and trail alignment. Trail users would need to stop and potentially yield to cross traffic. (Signalization will not be implemented as part of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension Project. Crossing control mechanisms would be examined during planning of the trail facility). The BNSF open space and trail and the Bear Creek Parkway extension were both examined in the Downtown Transportation Master Plan (DTMP).

Alternative 4 would use 0.31 acres of the RTC Open Space for a new wetpond. Trail connections would be maintained.

Summary

In summary, Alternative 1 would have the most direct and indirect impacts on recreation resources. Direct impacts include the acquisition of 3.2 acres from the RTC Trail and Open Space and 0.05 acres from Luke McRedmond Landing. Indirect impacts include increased noise and visual effects to users of the Sammamish River and Bear Creek Trails.

Alternative 3 would have no impacts on existing recreation resources and would provide an additional pedestrian connection to the BNSF corridor, which is planned for future open space and trail use. Alternatives 2 and 4 would both require acquisition of 0.05 acres from Luke McRedmond Landing. These alternatives would also run parallel to the proposed BNSF open space and trail, approximately 120 feet away. Alternative 4 would also provide an additional pedestrian connection to the proposed BNSF open space and trail corridor.

Mitigation Measures

Potential mitigation measures to offset the impacts of the build alternatives on recreation resources include replacing lost open space and trail facilities and incorporating design elements (including landscaping) that is consistent with the recreation facilities in the area.

To mitigate the loss of the RTC Center Open Space and Trail under Alternative 1, the City could pursue the acquisition of replacement open space in a suitable location. This space should fulfill the functions of the existing open space – that is, as a recreation facility and a habitat corridor. The replacement space should be larger than the area affected, to compensate for the temporal loss of recreation functions and values. The City could also pursue an alternate trail connection between the Sammamish River Trail and RTC and construction of additional trail connections in other needed areas, to compensate for the length of trail and the RTC connection that will be lost under Alternative 1.

Fewer mitigation measures would be required under Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 because the degree of impacts would be much less. The number of trees removed (regardless of whether they are part of a recreation resource) would be limited to those necessary for the safe construction and operation of the roadway. Policy NE-70 in the RCP states that significant trees removed during the course of construction will be replaced on site. Therefore, any trees removed during construction of Bear Creek Parkway will be replaced under any alternative. Policy NE-74 also states that street trees will be provided along all arterial streets, where practical. If practical, the new roadway will be tree-lined.

Other potential mitigation measures include incorporation of design elements into the new roadway to enhance adjacent recreation facilities. This would be particularly relevant to the BNSF Railroad corridor crossing under either Alternative 3 or 4. Several artist renderings of this crossing were developed for the *Downtown Transportation Master Plan* (see Figures 3.10 and 3.11). Depending on the design theme chosen for the BNSF corridor, the roadway crossing could incorporate elements of that theme, including median and right-of-way landscaping, signing, and lighting. These measures would not be implemented until design of the open space and trail facilities is complete.

Figure 3.10
Downtown Transportation Master Plan Artist Rendering:
Urban Plaza at Street Crossing



Figure 3.11
Downtown Transportation Master Plan Artist Rendering:
Landscaping and Lawn at Mid-Block



Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

The use of the RTC Open Space and Trail is a significant unavoidable adverse impact associated with Alternative 1.